THE USE OF SHORT STORY IN TEACHING PRONUNCIATION OF ENGLISH VOWEL SOUNDS

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Abstract

The objective of this research was to find out the use of short story could improve the ability of the eighth grade students of MTs Negeri Luwuk in pronouncing the English vowel sounds. This research applied intact group design. The research population was the eighth grade students of MTs Negeri Luwuk. The sample of this research was selected by using cluster sampling technique. The samples of this research were class VIII B as experimental group consisting of 40 students and class VIII E as control group consisting of 40 students. In collecting the data, the writer used test. The test was used once as post-test. Then, the data were analyzed statistically. Having analyzed the data, it was realized that there were different scores obtained from control group and experimental group. In the other words, the t-counted (12.02) was higher than t-table (1.99). It means that the result indicated the use of short story can be used to improve the pronunciation of English vowel sounds of the eighth grade students at MTs Negeri Luwuk.

Keywords: Pronunciation; Vowels; Short Story

INTRODUCTION

Pronunciation is one of the language components which plays an important role in communication. Someone will not understand if the interlocutor mispronounces a word. It will impact the conversation. As Lewis and Hill (1992:72) argue "It is extremely difficult to listen to a speaker when pronunciation is inconsistent and it is tiring to listen to one who varies considerably from standard. Bad pronunciation can be seriously blocking the communication".

The learners of English mostly mispronouncing some words, especially in pronouncing the vowels sound. It is caused by several problems. The common problem faced by the learners

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of English especially Indonesian is that they do not pronounce some vowels or diphthongs "tense and lax" with an enough duration. They still get confused whether the vowels or diphthongs are pronounced tense or lax. For instance, when they say the word "name" and "make" which should be pronounced /neɪm/ and /meɪk/ (tense) but in fact they always pronounce /nɛm/ and /mɛk/ (becomes lax). It is caused by there is a differentiation between English and Indonesian. Indonesian has 6 vowels (a, i, u, e, ə, and o) while in English there are 12 vowels which contain tense and lax sounds.

Another problem is the Indonesian learners of English still find difficulty in pronouncing some irregular verbs. It can be seen in the irregular verb of "read" which is pronounced /riːd/ in present form but becomes /red/ in the past form. The written form of the word is similar but different in pronunciation. The changing is only in pronunciation not in the written form. It is caused by English as an inconsistent language, which the word is inconsistent in pronunciation. As Basri (2005:29) states "English has a 'bad reputation' as a very inconsistent language in that it shows a great discrepancy between spelling and pronunciation".

In addition, the next problem which causes the mistake in pronunciation is most learners of English always make generalization of all vowel sounds. For example, because the words "man", "ban", and "pan" are pronounced /mæn/, /bæn/, /pæn/ respectively, they will make a wrong conclusion that all of letters ‹a› putting in a word are pronounced /æ/. Therefore the words like "far", "want", and "car", which should be pronounced /fɑːr/, /wɑːnt/, /kɑːr/, tend to be pronounced /fær/, /wænt/, and /kær/ respectively.

There are many techniques and media that can be used in teaching pronunciation of English vowel sounds to solve those problems. One of them is reading a short story loudly. Abrams in Pardede (2011:17) defines short story "As a narrative that can be read at one sitting of from one-half hour to two hours, and that is limited to 'a certain unique or single effect,' to which every detail is subordinate". In other hand the literary of short story is not too long. It makes this medium can be used in teaching and learning in the class without taking much time. This idea is supported by Pardede (2011:17) who says "…short stories are the most suitable literary genre to use in English teaching due to its shortness…." Besides, short story is interesting to read because the text contains pictures. It makes the learners of English particularly Indonesian students interested in reading the text.

Additionally, the cause which makes short story can be used in teaching is because it is learnt at the eighth grade of Junior high school as stated in Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan (2006) "Membaca nyaring bermakna teks fungsional dan essai pendek sederhana berbentuk recount dan narrative dengan ucapan, tekanan dan intonasi yang berterima yang berkaitan dengan lingkungan sekitar". It is easy to find in students' handout and in the online text. Asking students to read story aloud can develop their speaking as well as listening skills. Moreover, it also leads to improve pronunciation, especially in vowel sounds. Short story includes words containing vowel. Furthermore, teacher can use it to teach pronunciation of English vowel sounds.

In relation to the above background, the writer conducted her research by focusing on teaching the pronunciation of English vowel sounds at MTsN Luwuk by using short story. The research question was formulated in the following "*Can the use of short story improve the pronunciation of English vowel sounds of the eighth grade students at MTs Negeri Luwuk?".* It was aimed to solve the pronunciation problems particularly in pronouncing English vowel sounds of the eighth grade students at MTs Negeri Luwuk.

METHODOLOGY

In this research, the writer applied intact group design to prove that the use of short story could improve students' pronunciation at the eighth grade students of MTs Negeri Luwuk. There were two groups in this design. The first was experimental group that was given treatment and post-test. The second was control group which was given post-test without treatment. These two groups were given the same post-test. The design of this research proposed by Hatch and Farhady was (1982:21) as follows:

$$\begin{array}{ll} G_1 & X \quad T_1 \\ \hline G_2 & \quad T_1 \end{array}$$

Where:
G_1 = experimental group
G_2 = control group
T_1 = post-test for experimental/control group
X = treatment

Population is crucial for the research because it will be an equipment to support her research. Gay (1996:112) defines "The population is the group of interest to the researcher, the group to which she or he would like the results of the study to generalizable". Related to the statement before, the writer took the eighth grade students of MTs Negeri Luwuk as the population. Actually it consists of six parallel classes. They are VIII Unggulan, VIII A, VIII B, VIII C, VIII D, and VIII E. Each class consists of 40 up to 41 students. The total number of the population is 203. Because VIII Unggulan is a special class, the writer did not put it to be the research population.

The research should have sample because it is needed in determining a research. Creswell (2005:146) states "A sample is a subgroup of the target population that the researcher plans to study for generalizing about the target population." It is significant for the writer to determine the sample of the research. Except VIII Unggulan, all of classes in the eighth grade are taught by the same teacher. That is why the sampling is categorized homogenous. The writer used cluster sampling technique in selecting the research sample. She followed several stages. Firstly, she prepared six pieces of papers and then wrote the name of each class on the paper. Secondly, she folded the papers and put them in a glass. Finally, she shook the glass and dropped two of the papers folded. The two classes she got would be the sample of the research. The first paper dropped was experimental group, while the second was control group.

The writer used two variables in this research, dependent and independent variables. The dependent variable was students' pronunciation, while the independent variable was the use of short story.

To obtain the data needed, the writer employed an instrument of data collection, namely test. The test covered post-test. The students were given post-test. It was conducted to both experimental and control groups. The post-test was the test to know the students' pronunciation of English vowel sounds after having the treatment. The writer compared the result of the post-test of experimental group after getting treatment and the result of the post-test of control group without treatment. The scoring system of the test could be seen as follows:

Table 1
The Scoring System of the Test

Name of Tests	Number of tested items	Score per item	Maximum Score
Pronouncing Test of Individual Words	20	1	20
Total			20

To know the ability of students, the writer firstly computed the individual score by using the formula by Purwanto (1991: 25) as follows:

$Np = \frac{R}{SM} X\ 100$

Where:
Np = students' percentage score
R = students' first score
SM = maximum score

Then the writer computed the students' mean score by using the formula proposed by Hatch and Farhady (1982:55) as follows:

$\overline{x} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$

Where:
$\overline{x}$ = mean scores
$\sum X$ = total of individual scores
N = total of students

After getting the mean score of both experimental and control groups, the writer computed the mean score of the deviation. The writer used a formula proposed by Arikunto (2002:276) as follows:

$M_d = \frac{\Sigma d}{N}$

Where:
M_d = mean of the difference in post-test between experimental and control groups.
N = number of students
Σ_d = the number of deviation

After computing the mean of deviation, the writer determined the sigma square deviation score by using formula proposed by Arikunto (2002:227):

$$\Sigma x^2 d = \Sigma d^2 - \frac{(\Sigma d)^2}{N}$$

Where:
$\Sigma x^2 d$ = total of square deviation
Σd = total of deviation
N = number of students

Then the writer analyzed the data in order to know the significant difference or testing hypothesis by using t-test formula as proposed by Arikunto (2002:275) as follows:

$$t = \frac{M_d}{\sqrt{\frac{\Sigma x^2 d}{N\,(N-1)}}}$$

Where:
T = t-test value
M_d = mean of the difference in post-test between experimental and control groups.
$\Sigma x^2 d$ = total of square deviation
N = number of students
1= valid number

FINDINGS

The post-test was given on February 19th, 2014 for control group while for experimental group on February 21st, 2014. It was conducted to know the students' ability with and without treatment. The results of post-tests showed whether the medium gave significant improvement or not. It can be seen in table 2 and 3.

Tabel 2
The Result of Control Group Post-test

NO	Initial name of the students	Score	
		Raw (0-20)	Standard (0-100)
1	Aap	8	40
2	Anp	8	40
3	Ara	8	40
4	Asi	8	40
5	Dfl	11	55
6	Fda	7	35
7	Fdm	11	55
8	Fat	11	55
9	Fsr	12	60
10	Kmy	10	50
11	Ksd	5	25
12	Lsa	5	25
13	Mdn	7	35
14	Mff	8	40
15	Mny	8	40
16	Mra	8	40
17	Msh	8	40
18	Mfm	6	30
19	Mal	5	25
20	Nal	10	50
21	Rap	5	25
22	Rmm	5	25
23	Srd	5	25
24	Sml	12	60
25	Smi	11	55
26	Stw	9	45
27	Sfy	4	20
28	Sga	12	60
29	Sft	11	55
30	Wsu	7	35
31	Zkl	5	25
32	Sds	5	25
33	Wqa	5	25
34	Wra	4	20
35	Wjb	11	55
36	Waa	12	60
37	Yra	8	40
38	Ysn	8	40
39	Zas	12	60
40	Lrd	4	20
		319	**ΣxG2** =1595

Table 3
The Result of Experimental Group Post-test

NO	Initial name of the students	Score	
		Raw (0-20)	Standard (0-100)
1	Adm	13	65
2	Arp	12	60
3	Ads	14	70
4	Asp	18	90
5	Ajs	13	65
6	Itp	15	75
7	Iks	12	60
8	Iws	13	65
9	Jwd	18	90
10	Lml	18	90
11	Mas	17	85
12	Mrd	17	85
13	Meh	16	80
14	Mik	17	85
15	Msr	18	90
16	Nas	16	80
17	Njn	20	100
18	Nan	13	65
19	Ndl	18	90
20	Nha	10	50
21	Ors	18	90
22	Psr	14	70
23	Ram	15	75
24	Rhk	17	85
25	Rmd	12	60
26	Rdr	14	70
27	Rkl	17	85
28	Ryl	12	60
29	Ssp	20	100
30	Sth	13	65
31	Svs	15	75
32	Scr	18	90
33	Skr	16	80
34	Spa	17	85
35	Sfm	18	90
36	Ucd	18	90
37	Wfd	18	90
38	Ylk	12	60
39	Rfm	14	70
40	Rjb	15	75
	Total	621	**Σx** G1=3105

Based on the table 2, the highest score of control students in the post-test was 60 and the lowest score was 20. The writer then calculated the students' mean score by applying the formula proposed by Hatch and Farhady. All of the standard scores of the students were added, and then divided by the number of the students. The mean computation can be seen as follows:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum X}{N}$$

$$\bar{x} = \frac{1595}{40}$$

$\bar{x}_{G2} = 39.875$

Referring to the table 3, the highest score of experimental students in the post-test was 100 and the lowest score was 60. It indicated that the treatment had significant role in increasing the pronunciation of students. Then the writer calculated the students' mean score.

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\Sigma \mathbf{x}}{N}$$

$$\bar{x} = \frac{3105}{40}$$

$\bar{x}_{G1} = 77.62$

The writer computed the deviation and square deviation of the students' scores in the post-test (both in experimental and control groups) after calculating the mean score. The result is presented in the following table.

Table 4
The Result of Deviation Post-test in Experimental and Control Groups

NO	Post-test of control group G2	Post-test of Experimental group G1	Deviation (G1 –G2) d	Square deviation d^2
1	40	65	25	625
2	40	60	20	400
3	40	70	30	900
4	40	90	50	2500
5	55	65	10	100
6	35	75	40	1600
7	55	60	5	25
8	55	65	10	100
9	60	90	30	900
10	50	90	40	1600
11	25	85	60	3600
12	25	85	60	3600
13	35	80	45	2025
14	40	85	45	2025
15	40	90	50	2500
16	40	80	40	1600
17	40	100	60	3600
18	30	65	35	1225
19	25	90	65	4225
20	50	50	0	0
21	25	90	65	4225
22	25	70	45	2025
23	25	75	50	2500
24	60	85	25	625
25	55	60	5	25
26	45	70	25	625
27	20	85	65	4225
28	60	60	0	0
29	55	100	45	2025
30	35	65	30	900
31	25	75	50	2500
32	25	90	65	4225
33	25	80	55	3025
34	20	85	65	4225
35	55	90	35	1225
36	60	90	30	900
37	40	90	50	2500
38	40	60	20	400
39	60	70	10	100
40	20	75	55	3025
	1595	3105	$\Sigma d = 1510$	$\Sigma d^2 = 72450$

The computation of the students' mean deviation of experimental and control groups was presented as follows:

$$M_d = \frac{\Sigma_d}{N}$$

$$M_d = \frac{1510}{40}$$

$$M_d = 37.75$$

Having counted the mean deviation, the writer determined the square deviation score as follows:

$$\Sigma x^2 d = \Sigma d^2 - \frac{(\Sigma d)^2}{N}$$

$$= 72450 - \frac{(1510)^2}{40}$$

$$= 72450 - \frac{2280100}{40}$$

$$= 72450 - 57002.5$$

$$\Sigma x^2 d = 15447.5$$

Finally, the writer needed to statistically analyze to see the difference between the mean achieved in the post-test of control group and post-test of experimental group by applying t-test formula as follows:

$$t = \frac{M_d}{\sqrt{\frac{\Sigma x^2 d}{N\,(N-1)}}}$$

$$= \frac{37.75}{\sqrt{\frac{15447.5}{40\,(39)}}}$$

$$= \frac{37.75}{\sqrt{\frac{15447.5}{1560}}}$$

$$= \frac{37.75}{\sqrt{9.9}}$$

$$= \frac{37.75}{3.14}$$

$$= \mathbf{12.02}$$

DISCUSSION

In the process of treatment, the writer taught how to pronounce the English vowel sounds correctly to the students. In fact, there are twelve vowels in English. As Indriani (2011) states that they are /iː/ for 'tea', /ɪ/ for 'sit', /e/ for 'pen', /æ/ for 'sad', /ɜː/ for 'bird', /ə/ for 'ago', /ɑː/ for 'art', /ʌ/ for 'up', /uː/ for 'food', /ʊ/ for 'foot', /ɔː/ for 'war', and /ɒ/ for 'not'. In every meeting, the writer taught two vowels to the students in experimental group by using the words in short story given. The students were asked to read aloud the words in short story containing English vowel sounds. At the first meeting, the writer taught how to pronounce sound /ɪ/ and /æ/. The students seemed understand and could pronounce the words given correctly at the time. It was also happened in other meetings. They could repeat the correct pronunciation from the writer. The sounds learnt before were forgotten by the students after 2 meetings. The writer needed some extra time to repeat the vowel sounds again and again.

Refferring to the fact of the problem about pronunciation faced by the students, the writer related to the previous studies that have been discussed obviously from Kurniasih (2009) and Yuliana (2011). In Kurniasih's research, she discussed about teaching interdental sounds through short passage, while in Yuliana's research, she also discussed about whether the use of reading short passage could improve pronunciation ability. Those two researches were experimental research design. In this recent research, the writer did the same as the two previous studies that is experimental research. In contrary, the difference in this research is the writer used intact group design which the data collection were taken by using post-test while in Kurniasih and Yuliana researches used pre-test and post-test. In other hand, the recent research was emphasized on the use of short story to improve the students' pronunciation. The writer focused more to solve the students' problems in pronouncing English vowels sound. The recent

research found that the students' pronunciation could be improved after getting treatment. It was different from the students who did not get the treatment which was still in the low progress. This fact was found by the writer after analyzing the result of post-test in experimental and control groups. It could be seen from the students' score, where in experimental was higher than the score in control group. Referring to the result, it showed that short story was one of effective media that helps the students to improve their pronunciation of English vowel sounds.

Based on the findings, the writer compared the result with previous studies written by Kurniah (2009) and Yuliana (2011). The result in Kurniah's research showed that the t-counted (3.46) was higher than t-table (2.064). Besides that in Yulina's research, the result indicated that t-counted (21.0) was higher than t-table (1.729), while the recent research result got that t-counted was also higher than t-table. From the result above, it showed that short story can be used to help the students to improve their pronunciation of English vowel sounds.

Based on the result of post-test in experimental group after conducting the treatment, the writer concluded that the students had positive progress in pronouncing the English vowel sounds. Few students still made mistakes in pronouncing some words containing the hardest sound /ɑː/, /ɜː/, and /ʌ/. In other hands, the mistakes were happened to most of students in control group. The writer concluded that the students made these mistakes because of generalization pattern from them. The writer found that most of the students got difficulty in differentiating the sound /ɑː/ with the sound /æ/. When there was a word containing letter ‹a›, they would make a generalization. For example, because the word 'bad' is pronounced /bæd/, respectively the students tend to pronounce the word 'last' become /læst/ while it should be pronounced /lɑːst/. Another example of generalization mistaken was in 'bus' and 'put' which the vocal letter was identical but different in pronunciation. In fact, the student pronounced 'bus' with correct pronunciation /bʌs/ but in the word 'put' they was extremely wrong pronouncing the word become /pʌt/ . Most of the students also made few mistakes because they read the word as the written form. It could be seen when they should pronounce the word 'girl' and 'word' which should be pronounced /gɜːl/ and /wɜːd/, tend to be /giːl/ and /wɔːd/ respectively. As the result of post-test, the writer divided the dominant error in pronouncing the vowel into three levels; easy, medium, and hard. The hardest vowel sounds to be pronounced were /ɑː/ (55%), /ɜː/ (55%), and /ʌ/ (52.5%). In other hands, the medium vowel sounds were

/æ/ (50%), /ə/ (50%), /ɔ:/ (47.5%), and /ʊ/ (30%),while the easiest vowel sounds for the students were /ɒ/ (12.5%), /ɪ/ (25%), /e/ (25%), /i:/ (27.5%), and /u:/ (27.5%).

In addition, the positive progress was affirmed by seeing the result of the individual mean score of post-test in control group and the individual mean score of post-test in experimental group. The result indicated the difference in improvement between post-test in control class and in experimental class was (37.74). It was also supported by the result of the percentage ofthe students' error in pronouncing English vowel sounds in control group was (87.5%) while in experimental group was (2.5%). This fact makes the writer comes to a conclusion that there is a progress after applying short story as a medium of this research.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

After analyzing the data, the writer draws some conclusions based on the result of the data analysis. Firstly, the use of short story can improve the students' pronunciation particularly for English vowel sounds. It can be seen that the students' score of post-test in experimental group reached to 77.62. Obviously, it indicated that the pronunciation of the eighth grade students at MTs Negeri Luwuk was improved after the treatment. Secondly, there was a significant difference between the mean values of post-test in control group and in experimental group. It was proved since t-test value 12.02 was higher than t-table value 1.99. It means that the writer hypothesis was accepted.

Referring to the importance of pronunciation, the writer then would like to offer some suggestions for the readers. Firstly, it is very crucial to integrate pronunciation with some skills, such as in speaking or listening skills. It is very useful for the students by being accustomed to their ear so that it makes their speech correctly in pronunciation. Furthermore, there is no block in the communication. Secondly, the teacher must provide the students more media which can support the materials given, for example recording of native speaker, dictionary, or pictures. Therefore, the recording of native speaker voice as the model will help them in learning the correct pronunciation, in fact they seldom hear a native speaker voice in their environment. Finally, every word in the short story, although just a few words, must be pronounced again and again to make the students remember and be accustomed to the correct pronunciation of the words.

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